A NEW HALL OF RECORDS.

DANGERS AND DISCOMFORTS OF THE REGISTER'S OFFICE.

More Than a Century Old, It Han Been Condemned Uncensingly for Twenty-four Wears-Not Enough Room, No Ventilation, and the Constant Mennes of Fire and Collapse-Records in Confusion and Many Lacking-Mr. Schmer's Struggle -A Black Page in Revolutionary His-

tory, and This Building's Place on It. TThe old Register's office, the most famous of all the buildings in City Hall Park, is to go. It has been pronounced unsafe by the Building Department, unhealthy by the Board of Health, and inadequate for the work intended for it by those in charge of the records of the metropolis. That it is all of there a trip through its musty, ill-smelling rooms would convince the most in-experienced. The city has grown too fast for it, and long ago it was felt that the time was at hand when the city would have to build a new place for its records or be in danger of losing them. A stray spark from a cigar or cigarette, a burning match carelessly thrown down in a corner, and the ramshackle old building, which looks so strong and substantial on the outside,

present site, there will be undoubtedly the usual arge number of protests from the organizations in the city which work for the preservation of historic buildings, for the present Register's office passed through the revolutionary period, and its history fairly teems with exciting incidents. As a prison it was the scene of some of the most awful tragedies of the time, and consequently any objection to tearing it down un-doubtedly will be overcome when the time ardoubtedly will be overcome when the time arrives. It has for years been an eyesore to many Americans who have known its history; known of the crucities practised within its four walls when the British occupied New York; known of the sufferings of American patriots; known of the sufferings of American patriots; known of its horrors when it was a debtors' prison.

The lawyers who are now working to bring about the change were first brought to a realizing sense of the total inadequacy of the Register's office, as it now stands, at the time the Legislature annexed the village of West Chester to New York city. Many of them had been active in previous attempts to remedy the evil, but when Register Sohmer had to decline to receive the records and maps from the Town Hall of Westchester because he had no room for them, and because, too, he would not consent to be held responsible for their safety, there was aroused a protest which there was no stoopping. Lawyer S. Stanwood Menken of the firm of Philbin & Beekman was the first man to come to the front and demand that a new building be creeted. He received assurances of support from so many lawyers and real estate men that he went right shead. The Building Department, the Health Board, and the Grand Jury have helped Mr. Menken in the fight. Inspectors looked over the structure and pronounced it rotten, and then after the Health Board and that a keep the structure and pronounced it rotten, and then after the Health Board and the Grand Jury took up the Board had had a word to say about the sanitary arrangements, the Grand Jury took up the



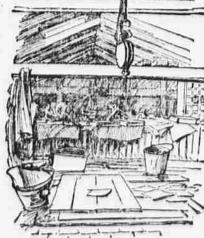
The best known lawyers in the city have de- | matter and made presentment on it. Among



INSIDE THE PRONT ENTRANCE.

ton, and John Webber was appointed to make public the condition of this storehouse of city records and demand that it be torn down and a new building erected. This was the original agitation in favor of a new building for the records, and because of their enthusiasm the committeemen got themselves into a heap of trouble with Boss Tweed and his followers. Mr. Lockman was arrested for his part in pushing the reform, but backed as he was by the bar of the State he escaped serious consequences.

Since that time at regular intervals lawyers in this city have stirred up the matter again, but the indifference of the city officials and the lack of support from brokers, real estate people, lawyers, and others who should have been the very first to interest themselves in any move tending to make safer the mortgages, deeds, and other county papers, have weakened the movement each time. This present move-



ONE OF THE DOCUMENT ROOMS. ment, however, is almost sure to lead to satisfactory results. It is too widespread to die out; everybody who has any interest in preserving the county papers is in sympathy with it. So the organization of the new body known as the Association to Procure the Immediate Erection of a New Hall of Records gives promise that within a reasonable length of time the historic structure will be either tora down to make way for a new Register's office or will be left

If, when the Board of Estimate and Apportionment is able to appropriate money for the new building, it concludes to place it on the

It was as follows:

"In considering the fire hazard of the building and the safety of the records, it is fair to start with the statement that ine Hall of Records of a great city should be a building made as secure from the danger of fire, either from without or within, as it is possible to make it; and it should be so arranged as to reduce the possible loss by any accidental fire to a minimum. It sho id stand even in a confiagration. The old Hail of Records possesses none of these features, and in some respects is about as bad and unsafe as it could well be. It is of a most heterogeneous style of construction, combining prison vaults and sash and frame enclosed portico, vaulted brick ceilings but a light wooden roof, some heavy brick dividing walls, but with open doorways and open stairways, so that inside it is practically all one. The different floors and rooms are all connected, and smoke, fire, or water in one could do damage in another. The massive-looking vaulted ceiling of the first floor



The cold Haird of Records possesses none of tiese and useafe as it could well be. It is of a most heterogeneous style of construction, combined to the combined of the combine

is no room to arrange them, and so they are placed about anywhere, and a month's search would be required to find many papers which the lawyers think they ought to be able to lay their hands on at a moment's notice. Every day, too, the records become more incomplete. Register Sohmer, forbidden by the authorities to put any more libers on the upper floor, cannot receive new records at all. The Westchester records are without a place, too, so that altogether the office is in a pretty bad way. Mr. Menken and his colleagues point at the halls of records in



CORNER OF THE MAP ROOM.

other places around New York, and say that by comparison New York soffice is a disgrace to the city. The Brooklyn office is larger, lighter, better arranged and more convenient in every way. Even White Plains and Jamaica have hetter buildings for the purpose than has New York, while in Rockland and Richmond counties lawyers have lees trouble in getting at what they want than they have in the building at the east end of City Hall Park.

One of the strongest supporters of the project for a new building is Register Schmer himself. Mr. Schmer is theroughly discusted with his present quarters and is in a constant state of mental agitation over the things in his charge.

Recently be declined to be responsible for any new papers that were brought to him, on the ground that he couldn't hold the building up with his hands any more than he could prevent possible combustion in some one of the dreary each of the couldn't hold the building up with his hands any more than he could prevent possible combustion in some one of the dreary each of the couldn't hold the building up with his hands any more than he could prevent possible combustion in some one of the dreary each of the couldn't have frowned on him. In the first brace, the Board of Estimate and Apporthonment seem to have frowned on him. In the first brace, the Board of Estimate and Apporthonment seem to have frowned on him. In the first brace, the Board cat his estimate \$22,000 when the annual budget was made up, and, as a result, he says, he was obliged to let a number of employees go and then reduce salaries all around. Mr. Sohmer has requisitioned the Public Works Department for about two dozen different things, and so far has received only a few locks for doors, a half dozen chairs, and one desk. Mr. Sohmer asked that a closet be put in for lawyers' coats, a numeer of coats having been stolen from pegs while their owners were at work. Neither of these requests was granted. Mr. Sohmer asked that it he should have the provided for the folio witers, who now have the



ALL EXTRA SPACE UTILIZED.

of the Assembly Journal, and the Sons of Liberty adopted the cabalistic "forty-five" as their counterisgn, Holf's Journal of Feb. 15, 1770, contained the following item:

"Yesterday, the forty-fifth day of the year, forty-five gentlemen, friends of Capt. McDougal and the glorious cause of American liberty, went in decent procession to the New Gaol, and dined with nim on forty-five months old."

It was directly in front of the New Jail that the famous liberty pole fights took place and only a few feet away in the fields that the Sons of Liberty, after two days of hard fighting, planted the pole.

The dark period of the New Jail came when the notorious Capt. William Cunningham was appointed British Provost Marshal of New York. During the seven years that the British occupied the city he had charge of the Jail and during the whole Revolution a more cold-blooded villian did not come to the front. He was appointed by Gen. Gage, and, while some historians say that he was at Newgate hanged for his crimes, others—Bancroft among them—say they were unable to find any such name on any of the prison records.

Cunningham was particularly bitter against Americans, because he was in some of the liberty pole fights and was severely handled by the natricts. He turned out to be a monster. There were numerous places of confinement for the patricts in the city then, the sugar house in Liberty street, the new or Middle Datch Church, and other places, but the new hall was reserved for conspicuous men who feil into Cunningham had his own quarters on the right of the main door. The guard room was on the opposite side. The deputy's room was within the first barricade. Keefe, the deputy, was another raseal. The entrance to the new jail was reserved for conspicuous men who feil into Cunningham had his own quarters on the right of the main door. The deputy's room was within the first barricade. Keefe, the deputy, was another raseal. The entrance to the new jail was guarded day and night by two armed sentinels, the first and second barrica

THE PASSING OF THE TRAPPER. Profits Are Small,

From the Philadelphia Times. Among the changes that an advancing civili-zation and a senseless denudation of forest land are creating throughout the length and breadth of a great continent, none are more conspicuous | D than those pertaining to the fauna of this country. The solitudes of the great primeval forests, that formerly abounded in wild game, beautiful birds and fowls of the air, and valuable furbearing animals, are now nearly as deserted as the great Western plains where the buffalo long since left nothing but traces of his existence behind. Trappers find it more difficult to obtain their furs each season, and along with the sportsmen they retreat further into the cold regions north of us, penetrating into the wilds of British America, where life in winter is scarcely endurable.

The fur trapper has had his day in the United States, and as a product of past conditions hets disappearing as surely as the came which he has hunted. In the great northern belt of States bordering upon the Canadian line he is found in dwindling numbers, vainly striving to make a living in his precarious calling, and bemoaning the times when it was an easy mat-ter to find enough animals in his traps each day to keep him supplied with money. It is now the work of a week to gather the skins that formerly came to his traps in a day.

The popularity of furs has not declined. In fact, they are more in demand than ever, and fashion decrees that they shall be worn every winter on garments for men and for women. Most of them command a higher price than ever in the history of civilization, but the trap-per does not profit so much by this change as might be supposed. The fur-bearing animals are disappearing faster than the prices for the furs advance. Other unsettled regions of the

markets of the world with skins, and science is The fur of the cat, dog, sheep, lamb and other through the dyer's art and the currier's skill the wearers of cheap furs are totally deceived. It is not an easy matter to ascertain the relative value of the important furs, but those taken from

globe are being explored to help supply the

the forests and woods of this country are much higher than in former days. The silver fox, that abounded so pineralizedy are as into a silver fox, that abounded so pineralizedy are as into a silver fox the more valuable it is, and consequently the further north the trappers go the better fluck they have. The darker, the fur of the silver fox the more valuable it is, and consequently the further north the trappers go the better fluck they have. Those over the Canadian border trap more and better silver foxes, although northern Maine and the Michigan pennisula have yielded some excellent silver foxes. Owing to the great demand for this fur, the animals have been trapped and honted so persistently that they are very searce, and the few remaining ones are more mind and harder to catch than learn a silver foxes, and they run all the way from \$10 to \$50 apice for the raw fur. Dealers grade the skins secording to their idea of the value, and the trapper is not always sure that he will receive the highest quotations even after he has shipped his booty to market. The cross fox fur comes third on the list, and is generally worth from \$15 to \$20, according to size, general beauty, and rickness of color. The rur of the other hands and the trapper is not always sure that he will receive the highest quotations even after he has shipped his booty to market. The cross fox fur comes third on the list, and is generally worth from \$15 to \$20, according to size, general beauty, and rickness of color. The rur of the other hands is a six of the other in a six of the other in a six of the other is nearly as valuable, and a good specimen will of market, such as the minds, skins, hander, wildcar, red and gray fox, muskent, and rabbit. The prices paid for these vary from a few cents apice to everal dollars. The rabbit skins are so clear that the trappers would not take the frouble to express them to the clear fit were not for the fact that they are principal further and the silver by form a few cents apice to everal dollars. The trapper

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PHOTOGRAPHED BY NATURE.

A Forest Landscape Pictured in Colors on a Chestout Slab.

HARTFORD, Nov. 28.-That nature is a rare artist in colors, applying them with incompara-ble effect, every one knows; but few persons are aware probably that occasionally she also tries her cunning hand at photography. Frank S. Peabody of Pawcatuck, at the extreme south-eastern end of the Nutmeg State, has a wonderfully precise and curious specimen of her handlwork in this way. It is a natural landscape photograph on a chestnut slab.

A day or two ago, while wandering about the A day or two ago, while wandering about the Ledging Woods, a vast and indescribable dreary wilderness of tangled forest, morasses, and ferns, in the northern part of the hill town of North Stonlington, Mr. Peahody came into a clearing in the heart of the juncle that was bestrewn with the prostrate trunks of many forest trees felled by the woodsman's axe. Stumbling about the jumble of logs, planks, fire and brashwood, many pieces of which were matted with patches of moss and lichens, forming singular and striking arabesque art patterns, he finally espied a short chestnut plank on whose wide face was imprinted a vivid, clearly defined picture of the woodland scene thereabout.

on whose wide face was imprinted a vivid, clearly defined picture of the woodland scene thereabout.

"The slab," said Mr. Peabody, "had been lying for nearly a year in a muck or swamp region of the ledging Woods, and no doubt the disinterating effluvia from the ground, rocking with moisture, had wrought a phenomenal chemical change in its smooth face, developing therein a pholographic fitness to receive and perpetuate impressions. At any rate a nerfect likeness of the landscape confronting the chestnut slab camera, set up there by nature, had been taken by it and faithfully and sharply fixed thereon. In fact, there is the whole scene imprinted accurate to a dot, with every tree, its crown and trunk, interlacing branches and boughs, even minute twics, swamp shrubbery and spindling stadilers and shoats, clearly defined in the plank likeness. The slab, since it was in a nearly recumbent posture, of course, photographed only theirtees and brush that were directly in front and above it, but the likeness is an unmistakable one. Furthermore, it is a color photograph, for the outlines of the objects traced on the plank plate are of a deep yellow, like other."

Mr. Peabody displayed his odd treasure in the show window of the Westerly Isady Tribune, and scores of people have examined it.

SMITH COLLEGE EVENTS.

Mrs. Burnett's " Pair Barbarian" Presented by the Students of Wallace House.

NORTHAMPTON, Mass., Nov. 27. Three times year a play is given by one of the campus houses at Smith College. The houses take turns in giving these presentations, and each house gives a play every two years. Two years ago the girls of the Wallace House gave a fine interpretation of "She Stoops to Conquer." and much interest was felt in the dramatic performance this year. The name of the play is always kept a secret from the rest of the college until the evening of its presenta ion. On this occasion it was Mrr. Frances Hodgson

Burnett's "A Fair Barbarian," as dramatized by Mrs. M. A. H. Emerson, wife of Prof. Emerson of Amherst Co.lege.

All the parts were well taken. The first place of honor may be safely assigned to the heroine, Miss Cochran. Not only was her acting delignifully natural, but she was so beautiful that the whole addence lost its heart to her. Miss Gilbert, in the role of a quaint, loyable old maid; Miss Jones, as a tyrannical, domineering grandmother; Miss Browne, as the timid, shy granddaughter of the latter, and Miss Bitss as the typical Englishman, who, in spite of his English ideas of womanhood, falle deeply in loye with the unconventional American heroine, were all excellent. Miss lathrop as the Rev. A. Poupleton was 'freeistibly ludicrons, and furnished most of the fun.

The college has had two treats in the lecture line this week. On Wedne day afternoon Mrs. Todd of Amherst gave a talk before the C rrent Events Club on her summer trip to Japan, at the time of the eclipse. This evening Mrs. Marvaret Sangster gave a practical talk to the members of the Alpha Society and their friends on "Journalism as a Profession for Women."

SKUNKS AS PEIS.

Mr. Maynard, Who Has Tried It, Says It In Easy to Domesticate Them.

From the Boston Evening Transcript. At the meeting of the Boston Scientific Society last evening C. J. Maynard of Newtonville spoke quite at length on the much-maligned American animal, the skunk, giving the results of some five months' observations of one which he has domes-ticated. Mephie, for that is her name, was captured white quite young and being of affectionate disposition, has become greatly attached to her captors, and during the last half year has had free raige of Mr. Maynard's house and grounds, has made a trip in cars and stage to his summer home on Cape Cod, and has been handled and stroked by hundreds of persons, including many ladies. Site is kind, timid, good-natured, mayful. During this time site has afforded opportunity for constant study, and Mr. Mayhard knows more now about this beculiar American product than any other lying person. He is able to correct many statements heretofore made that are not true; he finds that it will escape if there is a possibility of se doing, and defends itself only when cornered, and that before its attack it gives a number of warning signals quite as pronounced in character as those of the rattesmake or the cotton-mouthed moccasin, so that one who sees the signals may escape the decourment by remaining absolutely motionies. The creature will then slink awar, for it defends itself only with great rejuctance. As to attacks on the barnyard, Mr. Maynard thinks that much of this kind of damage is due to other animals, for so well as he can judge the animal is straid of the heu, and if at all destructive could catch only young chickons. tured while quite young and being of affectionate

hen, and if at all destructive could eatch only young chickens.

In connection with his first paper, Edward E. Norton, president of the society, spoke of the skubk in its commercial aspect, it being an exclusively American animal which furnishes about a million skins annually for manufacturing purposes. The quality of these is dependent on a strict imaginary line, including Massaoinusetts, New York and Ohio, and so closely does the quality conform to these limits and so much does it vary outside of them that an expert can tell the place of capture within forty or lifty miles merely by an inspection of the fue.

AN EAST SIDE GUILD.

THE UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT AS VIEWED BY ITS NEIGHBORS,

Opinions as to What It Has Accomplished in the Neighborhood of its Home in Beinnery Street-Its Work Among Chibdres-Good That It Has Effected.

A recent editorial article in THE SUN on the University Settlement, which has been in operation on the east side under the name of the Neighborhood Guild since 1887, has aroused a great deal of discussion over the question of the value of the association as a moulder of opinion and a help in reducing the antagonism of the poor against the well to do, to accomplish which purpose is the primary object of the organization. As the great majority of the 135,000 votes that were cast at the last election for William J. Bryan came from the discontented, the question is asked whether the University Settlement is a paying investment, and whether it has accomplished anything at all on the line it set out to follow and has followed consistently since its foundstion. The question was put this week by a Sus reporter to James B. Reynolds, the head worker in the settlement, and togothers. reply was that the organization had taken no part lu national politics; that it was not one of its functions to take part in national

politics, but that the Assembly district in which the home of the Settlement is located had given a very large majority for McKinley for President, and that the election disley for President, and that the election district in which the home is situated had for the first time given a Republican majority. The vote was 85 to 63 in layor of McKinley. Always before it bud been in about the same proportion the other way. Further it was said that of the members of the cub founded by the settlement only three had voted for Blyan. All the testlement only three had voted for Blyan. All the testlement only three had voted for Blyan. All the testlement a couple of afternoens is the district, the idea being to get from the people who lived there and from association would be fitted to judge of the work of the settlement, their calvious of it, so that a fair it dament could be formed of the amount and the value of the work being done. But at the outset it was found that the latter part of the object was unattainable, the reason being that the population. The boys and grais and young men and young women who were members or publis of the settlement should now be developed. If it ever were to develop, are no longer there. They have moved away and spread all over the city. Where six or seven years ago the population was almost exclusively German, to-day it is almost exclusively German, to-day it is almost exclusively flussian Hebrew. Out of a nepulation of \$8,000 in these blocks there are, practically speaking, no old residents. The one found here and their ordinarily shakes his head and says: "The district has gone to heli." while he signator the old days and the old helgithors. "What do you maink of the University Settlement?" asked The Six reporter of Moritis Published the set of the city had been there twenty-two years.

"What do you mean," he asked.

"Is it a good, thoug Has it made the neighborhood any better; said the reporter.

"What do you maink of the layer of Moritis Published to be a rively-house home, and has been there twenty-two years.

"What do you maink of the layer of the proper of th trict in which the home is situated had for the first time given a Republican majority. The vote was 85 to 63 in layer of McKinley.

but goed there. They're married new, and live up town."

"What good does it do?" asked the reporter,

"Well, it makes the streets he kent clean,"
was the reply "and it makes the landlords fix their houses, and it teaches the little children how to wash."

"Anything else?"

"Well, it has schools. I guess it's a good thing. I know my children used to think it was a great place. I liked to have them there because I knew then where they were. They learned some to save there.

"Has the neighborhood improved lince they came here?"

Tas the neighborhood improves lince they came here?

"Well, I don't know. All the Germans have moved away, and Russian Jews have come in. It don't know is that an improvement. It is a good place. I stees, for a lot of the college of the case of the college of the case of the college of the Eldridge street station. Ward Man Charles Nells who has been in the predict ten years, said when the question was put to him:

"Who, man, it's the future generation that will show the good those people are doing. It isn't for anybody to say what good they are doing now. They're working with the children now principally. They teach them to clean and make things about them clean. There's hardly a day passes but some children come in here and tell us about people throwing asless in the street and the like. They krep a fine place for the children, and the young people to go, and they're in good company. They have schools where they clusted the young and they are the children and here is never the young a slight of they find here is well in the street and here is never to work they are a good of the street stop.

"They're not lise most of such places, always kicking to the police about everything and choose they clusted would be seen for them anywhere. They keep the boys and girls off the streets top.

"They're not lise most of such places, always kicking to the police about everything and complaining. We have companing from them once in a walle about wence on the streets of the waster of the done yet that wasn't right. They're go, d poonle, and we'd stretch a point to help them. There was a cafe and coffee house started near them last winter. It looked as if it was going to be staily, and we got rid of it for them in a few days. You never say what an amount of good they're doing.

They re carrie, another ward man, agreed with the first of the predict of the settlement. However, and here were that the one of the residuer, and been done yet that then of the